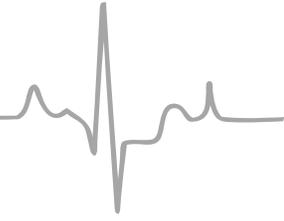




# HEPATITIS C

What is it and do I have it?



## WHAT IS HEPATITIS C?

Hepatitis C is a disease caused by a virus that infects the liver. If left untreated, it can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure. Anyone can get Hepatitis C, although more than 75% of adults that are infected were born between 1945 & 1965. The symptoms for Hepatitis C can disappear, so many people go untreated and develop chronic hepatitis C. Diagnosis usually occurs by accident when a patient has a routine check-up or when their blood is tested before donation. The only way to know, if someone is infected, is by getting a Hepatitis C Antibody Test.

## HOW IS HEPATITIS C SPREAD?

Hepatitis C is not spread by casual contact such as hugging, kissing, sneezing, coughing, or sharing food or drink. You can get Hepatitis C by coming into contact with the blood of someone who has Hepatitis C. The most common ways the virus spread are:

- Sharing needles, syringes, or other equipment to inject drugs.
- Needle stick injuries in health care setting.
- Being born to a mother who has Hepatitis C.
- Sharing personal care items that may have come into contact with another person's blood, such as razors or toothbrushes.
- Having sexual contact with a person who is infected. Although transmission through sexual contact is low, the risk increases for those who have multiple partners.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Feeling very tired
- Joint pain
- Belly pain
- Itchy Skin
- Sore Muscles
- Dark Urine
- Yellowish eyes and skin (Jaundice)

## IS THERE A CURE?

For many people treatments are available that can cure Hepatitis C and prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer. Hepatitis C can be cured by taking an antiviral medicine. The correct combination of antivirals is decided by your doctor or a specialist. Those diagnosed with Hepatitis C should prevent further damage to their liver by avoiding alcohol, illegal drugs, and certain medications that can be hard on your liver.

## WHY ARE PEOPLE BORN BETWEEN 1945 AND 1965 MORE LIKELY TO HAVE HEPATITIS C?

No one is 100% sure why people born between 1945 and 1965 are at higher risk for Hepatitis C. The virus was discovered in 1989 and since then screening and safety practices have been put into place to safeguard against infection. People infected with Hepatitis C before control standards were put into place may have never been screened and no longer show symptoms. **The CDC now recommends that anyone born from 1945 through 1965 get tested for Hepatitis C.**